

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of MUSIC
REPORT**

**Coláiste Dún Iascaigh
Cahir, County Tipperary
Roll number: 76063D**

Date of inspection: 8 October 2013



**A N R O I N N | D E P A R T M E N T O F
O I D E A C H A I S | E D U C A T I O N
A G U S S C I L E A N N A | A N D S K I L L S**

REPORT
ON
THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN MUSIC

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Date of inspection	8 October 2013
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and teacher• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during four class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teacher

MAIN FINDINGS

- A very good quality of teaching and learning was observed in the lessons visited.
- There was a high level of student engagement with a focus on a wide range of music-making activities.
- Some good examples of collaborative learning were observed in the lessons visited.
- An appropriate use of resources was observed which included skilful use of information and communication technology (ICT).
- Music has a very high profile in the school, is available to all students on an optional basis and is very well-supported by in-school management.
- There was evidence of comprehensive planning in this single-teacher department.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consideration should be given to the manner in which the collaborative learning practices, evident in the lessons observed, could be extended to include a focus on peer-assessment and student self-assessment.
 - Ways in which the use of the visualiser and other ICT resources could be expanded to increase the learning opportunities for students should be explored.
 - The development of these strategies should also be reflected in the music department plan.
-

INTRODUCTION

Coláiste Dún Iascaigh is a co-educational secondary school under the trusteeship of the Tipperary Education and Training Board. The school has a current enrolment of 640 students. Music is available as an optional subject for the Junior Certificate and the Leaving Certificate examinations with options based on an open choice. Music is a compulsory subject in the optional Transition Year (TY) programme.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- There was a very good standard of teaching and learning in all lessons observed. These lessons were characterised by a warm classroom atmosphere with very good interpersonal relations between teacher and students. High expectations coupled with stimulating and enthusiastic teaching provided an effective environment conducive to learning.
- There was a high level of student engagement, and students' contributions to class discussions were valued, with praise used effectively to acknowledge their efforts. Some very good questioning and answering was also observed, with student responses affirmed and integrated into lessons where appropriate. An appropriate focus on literacy strategies was also evident.
- The resources available in the music room, particularly ICT, are used to very good effect and the use of teacher-generated handouts and worksheets adds to the quality of learning. The potential of the visualiser is just being realised. It would be very worthwhile to explore the possibilities of this powerful resource as a means of further enhancing the learning opportunities for students.
- Students were engaged in active music-making in a wide variety of ways in the lessons observed with very high standards of music performance. It is commendable that the standard of performance was so high with some groups so early on in the school year.
- The teacher monitored student learning effectively throughout the lessons observed. There is scope to develop student monitoring of their own learning through further engagement with the assessment for learning (AfL) strategies that encourage self-reflective practices.
- Some good examples of a collaborative learning environment allowing constructive and productive peer interaction and purposeful group work were also observed. There is certainly scope to develop this further and align it with the other AfL practices outlined above.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- School management is extremely supportive with regard to provision and whole-school support for the subject. Access to the subject is very good and it is very positive to note that even if a student has not studied Music for the Junior Certificate this is no barrier to taking it up for the Leaving Certificate.
- In line with national trends there is a gender imbalance, with significantly more girls than boys studying the subject. Management is aware of this and has looked

at ways to encourage a higher uptake by boys, with some progress noted. It is acknowledged however, that as option blocks are generated through student preference, other variables will always affect this balance.

- Timetable provision for Music is in line with syllabus guidelines. There is an appropriate spread of class contact time throughout the week along with a sufficient number of double periods in all year groups to facilitate practical work.
- The music room is very well-resourced, visually attractive, and considerable thought has been given to maximising the available space in order to optimise the musical learning opportunities for all students at all levels. The wide range of resources available includes ICT and a good selection of musical instruments.
- There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities and events which take place during the school year. This variety helps to raise the profile of Music in the school and is a significant contributor to raising awareness of other school activities.
- There is also a good range of co-curricular activities, especially in TY, which further strengthens the profile of Music in the school.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- There is evidence of very good planning for the development of Music in this single-teacher department. Comprehensive programmes of work, scheduling the topics to be covered, have been developed and were found to be in line with syllabus requirements. Due consideration has been given both to the cross-curricular and to the extra-curricular activities going on in the department and commendably the plan is reviewed on a regular basis.
- It is recommended that future planning includes consideration of ways of maximising the use of ICT in the classroom and how resources such as the visualiser, and the proposed tablets, which are due to be introduced in the near future, could be used even more effectively to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. It would also be worthwhile to link the range of literacy and numeracy strategies currently being utilised in the school into the overall music plan.
- However, as this is a single-teacher department, it would be important to ensure that these recommendations would be prioritised and undertaken within realistic and reasonable timeframes.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and subject teacher at the conclusion of the evaluation. The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

Published March 2014